(c) and (d) Government took up the matter strongly with Malaysian authorities that led to the immediate release of all but 3 deported since for overstay. Malaysian leaders including Acting Prime Minister have expressed regret and apologized over the incident. The Malaysian government has also conveyed that they would not like this incident to mar the tempo of our multi-faceted bilateral relations.

Indian workers in Gulf Countries

†3015. SHRI BASHISTHA NARAIN SINGH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of workers of Indian origin who went to the gulf countries till 2000 for various non-technical jobs and the number of workers out of them who have returned, so far;

(b) the number of such workers in these countries who are undergoing punishment or are being prosecuted as per law of the land; and

(c) what arrangements would be made to bring these wretched workers back by providing them suitable assistance?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI VINOD KHANNA): (a) As per information received from Ministry of Labour, 32,10,610 Indian workers went to countries in the Gulf between 1991 and 2000 for employment. Data on returnees is not available since workers who return do not inform any Government agency about their return.

(b) There are 7176 Indian workers undergoing imprisonment or are being prosecuted in the Gulf countries.

(c) Indian Missions ensure that there is no miscarriage of justice in respect of these cases. Efforts are also made to ensure speedy trial.

Damage control measures on Malaysian crisis

3016. SHRI K.B. KRISHNA MURTHY: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) what diplomatic damage control measures have been taken by

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.